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Can We Follow Jesus Today?

BY JEROME DAVIS

I will follow thee, Lord, but . . . Luke 9:61.

CHRISTIANITY is a dangerous faith, if it is really followed. It demands no compromise with evil and utter loyalty to Christ. Even the positive declaration of guarded loyalty, "I will follow thee, Lord, but . . . ," may debar. It will be remembered that the gospel tells of several men who were either called by Jesus or who volunteered to leave all and follow him. In each instance some reason is offered for delay. And they are good reasons, at least according to American Christian standards. One desires first to go and bury his own father, another first to bid farewell to his family. Here were men who had a great chance. They might have been numbered among the disciples of Jesus, they might have laid their impress on the welfare of humanity for countless generations to come; yet they failed because of a "but," good in itself but far from the highest loyalty.

We too have similarly volunteered to follow Jesus, to work under a revolutionary spiritual leader who was crucified for his cause. Yet as has been true of Christians in every age, how easy it is for us to qualify that discipleship!

Some there are who say: "We will use the Christian label, but 'following Christ' is a first century term and cannot apply to us. After all, Jesus was a Galilean peasant, who spoke Aramaic, about whom we have a fragmentary record in Greek taken from an oral tradition. The age in which he lived was not our age. The problems he faced were not our problems. He knew nothing of modern industry, our ma-

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chine civilization, or capitalism. He believed in demons, in a personal devil. His action was dominated by an apocalyptic hope."

Others there are who declare: "We would follow Jesus—but how difficult it is! We know not how. Amid the complexities of modern civilization, how are we to be guided by the teaching of the Galilean? When a Gandhi challenges the British empire with non-violent non-coöperation, when a Lenin works through violence and dictatorship to establish justice for those who toil, how are we to treat these movements in following Jesus? Again, if I am pastor of a church in an American industrial city, how follow the Master?—Jesus was never the pastor of any church. How can I follow him in a board-of-trustees' meeting composed of business men with a fundamentalist outlook?"

Following Jesus in This Century

These are real questions, barriers to some. They can hardly hold back those who are utterly committed to following Jesus in his major objectives of complete loyalty to God and to humanity. Jesus did not so much want his followers to obey him in every detail as to follow him; and to follow him is not to tread the shores of Galilee but to walk the great throbbing highways of the twentieth century, to seek to discover God's will for us as Jesus found it for himself. "If any man willeth to do his will, he shall know of the teaching."

There may be those who will say that in thus following Jesus we are but fabricating our own stereotype of the Master. Stereotypes are a danger, but there are safeguards. There is always his test, "By their fruits ye shall know them." Then, too, fragmentary as are the records, we do have the Gospels, the record of Paul, and the impress of the living Christ on the hearts and lives of all the great Christian prophets throughout the ages. We know that only love can understand love; only the utterly unselfish, spiritual personality can interpret Christ. We can check our own stereotypes by all the examples of heroic and sacrificial discipleship to Jesus that the ages have given to the world. These, after all, may be as effective checks as any that modern science affords.

"I will follow thee, Lord, but . . . " Perhaps the real "buts" of our generation are the more subtle and unconscious failures. Unconsciously we say: "I will follow thee, Lord, but of course using the traditional and conventional religious technique." We forget that Jesus was an innovator who broke with religious custom wherever it ran counter to life. The old wineskins must go. The Master healed on the Sabbath, laying down the revolutionary doctrine that every institution, religious or secular, was made for man and in his highest interest. Paul advocated faith in a risen Christ, an idea so revolutionary that it meant suffering and eventual death in Rome. When my father first went to Japan it was death to be a Christian and his first convert died in jail.

Today, if a new interpretation of God, the Bible, or sin causes a few of our congregation to become disturbed, we tend to modify our message. Fred B Smith declares: "Church officials are often willing t spend more time talking about the purchase of a new rug for the vestry than about world peace." Few modern business men would try to win a fortune selling a riding buggy of the model of even twenty years ago. Few of us are willing to use an automobile even five years old. Yet in our religious work how prone we are to let the model of 1881 guide us in 1931 Morality must not be merely custom-made with a religious sanction. The sacrament itself must lead us to social and sacrificial consecration. Our ritual must teach love as well as beauty. The creeds, with their ancient and hallowed symbols, have come floating down to us from the past. We would not lose their beauty, their spiritual symbolism, yet we would test them by the extent to which they illumine and guide the common mass of mankind to the radiant Christ-like and Christ-filled life. Meditation must not only be a personal communion with God, it must be frankly recognized as a sharing of life.

Class Religion

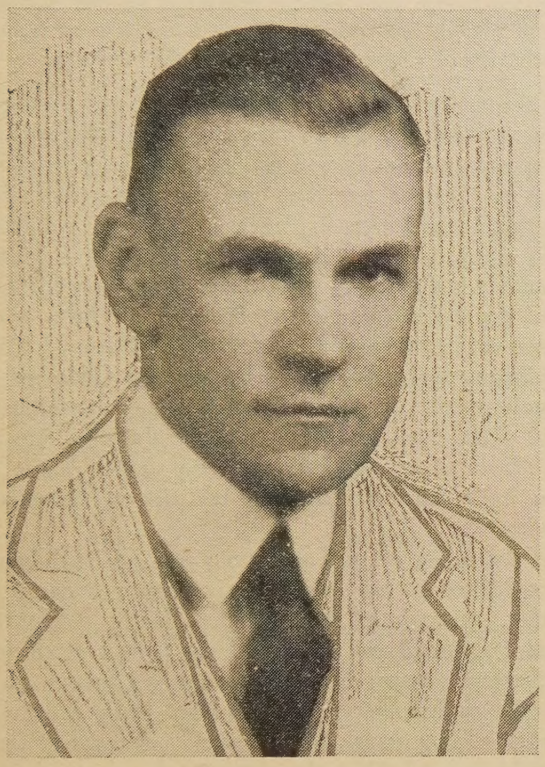
Too often our conventional church is the embodiment of a class religion, the sanctification of middle-class refinement. We go into communities where men and women are dying through human selfishness and sin and we try to minister to their needs through great edifices built to the glory of God and for the pride of man. Perhaps we work through conventional techniques and platitudinous sermons which have partially lost their deeper usefulness. Old cults, creeds, or customs, have their values, but at every point they must minister positively to our twentieth century life. Those in the church must define Christianity, through their homes, their business, and their community. Our conduct of the greatest enterprise on earth, the Church of God, must affect the daily workaday lives of people so profoundly that all men will say, "Yes, he is different—he *is* a Christian."

Wilfred Grenfell took Christ with him to Labrador, but he adapted his program and his technique to the people of that bleak coast until today not only churches but chapels, orphan asylums, schools, hospitals, coöperatives, even the reindeer are a monument to his ability to make Christ minister to the needs of men. This always means the adventurous life. While touring with him in 1915 we were aground three times, lost our anchor once, were on fire once, crashed into an iceberg once, and were always giving sixteen hours a day for the people. The fisherfolk could clearly see that the religion of Grenfell meant a transformation of their community as well as their individual lives.

War and Peace

Again we say, "I will follow thee, Lord, but never in opposition to my country." This may be a failure to live up to the highest vision that we might have. It is not only necessary to do the best we know, but to know the best we can. All the Master can de-

mand of any disciple is that through every act and thought he so place himself as to find the highest truth for him. Finding it, he must follow the gleam wherever it leads. One of the barriers to discipleship is failure to let the truth shine into our hearts and minds. We become encrusted with conventions, we reflect the ideas, standards, hopes, and fears of the particular brand of patriotism or nationalism which is dominant in our era. A seemingly great international crisis occurs. We do not spend a week in prayer and consecrated group-thinking to let the truth break



Jerome Dayis

through, we rather accept the standard of the herd and label it as "right." Thus nationalism becomes enthroned in our hearts even ahead of Jesus. We find exalted reasons for justifying what is popular. "I will follow thee, Lord, but surely Thou wouldst not have me take a stand against international conflict *in this situation.*"

Another world cataclysm may be just around the corner and if it comes we here will bear our full share of the responsibility. We are continually bombarded with the threat of war. The war department has already completed a detailed strategy for instantly mobilizing four to eleven millions in the next war. What are our detailed plans to follow Christ when that emergency comes! Harry Emerson Fosdick declares that he has been reconverted on the war issue, adding: "I hate war and never again will I sanction or support another." Have we thought through our own strategy.

Dr. Macintosh, one of America's greatest theologians, refused to take the oath of citizenship unless it was clearly understood that he placed loyalty to God ahead of loyalty to country. Although he had a distinguished world war record, he declared that if conflict ever occurred in violation of the Kellogg Peace pact, he would not fight. For refusing to betray his conscience and his God he was debarred by the United States Supreme court against the opinion of the chief justice and by the margin of a single vote. In effect the majority ruled that citizenship was for non-Christians only. No man who really places loyalty to Christ first can now be admitted.

But every Christian must place loyalty to his conscience and his God ahead of his country. Supreme court decisions and laws of congress cannot permanently endure if they run counter to morality and human welfare. The five thousand conscientious objectors in England during the late world conflict were on the average devoted followers of Christ, suffering more persecution than those who went to the front, and following a course of action which may have demanded far more moral heroism. The motto, "My country, right or wrong," must be refined to read, "My country, only in so far as she stands for Christ and humanity."

Loyalty to Peace Ideal

Charles Sumner, speaking in Tremont Temple during the Mexican War, gave the verdict of history when he said: "It is a war base in its object, atrocious in its beginning, immoral in all its influences and vainly prodigal of treasure and life. It is a war of infamy, destined to blot the pages of our history with incredible blackness. No success, no bravery, no victory can change its character."

Again, he attacked the argument that once war is declared it must be supported: "In what book of morals is it written that what is bad before it is commenced may become righteous merely by the fact that it has been commenced? Who on earth is authorized to transmute wrong into right?"

So often we are able with the Master to long for peace, to believe in the brotherhood of man, to love our enemies in the abstract. But let our country invade Nicaraugua, let it quarantine the Russian government, let it become involved in war, and then, because of the pressure of nationalism, we succumb to a "but." Of course we sincerely believe that the policy of *our particular nation* is Christian, but are we the victims of propaganda, rationalization, or false patriotism? Is it possible for us to follow the Master in not being subservient to nationalism? Are we willing to make clear the selfish national sins of our country, if that means unpopularity? Are we willing to pay the price of really helping to create the will to peace *in our community?* This inevitably means creating faith in the possibility of complete abolition of war. How often it has been said, this cannot be done because it never has been done! In 1903, Simon Newcomb, the great scientist who could calculate a future eclipse to the second, wrote: "The example of the bird does not prove that man can fly. May not our mechanicians be

ultimately forced to admit that aerial flight is one of the great class of problems with which man can *never hope to cope* and give up all attempts to grapple it?"

Yet within two months of that time the Wright brothers made their first successful flight. It is possible to create a warless world if we Christianize our nationalism, but never if patriotism dechristianizes our religion.

Conscience and Economic Standards

A still more potent qualification to discipleship is our unconscious conformity to the economic standards of our time. "I will follow thee, Lord, but . . . " we assume this could not mean conflict with the standards of capitalism. Wealth, position, economic power, all have not only accepted Christianity; they have made it their own. As ministers we may be called to churches by boards of control made up among others of the captains of finance. These leaders seem fine, devoted personal Christians, generous to the church, chivalrous, with all the hierarchy of personal virtues. There is so much that is fine and noble in these men, we say—surely Jesus would not have us oppose the philosophy underlying their acquisition of things, or the motivation underlying such terms as "rugged individualism," "the profit motive," "competitive success"; and yet in our hearts most of us have come to know that Jesus placed human values supremely first. No business run by a consecrated follower of Jesus would place profits as primary: business must be run for the kingdom of God.

It is this which gives such nobility and heroism to the work of Mr. Hapgood of the Columbia Conserve company of Indianapolis. He is running his business for character and human welfare, first, last, and all the time. The workers, in controlling and running the entire plant, are building cooperative spiritual and social values. Every business must become as spiritual as the church itself. The power of concentrated wealth in America will give large salaries and great donations to those who will refrain from challenging the standards and practices of capitalism. This is perhaps the most insidious "but" which faces the minister of our generation. After all, we ask, is it wise to say what we feel, to be as outspoken as Christ in a given situation? Will it not destroy our influence? Will it not limit our sphere of usefulness, still further deplete the meager resources which can be used for home and foreign missions? We will be charged with prejudice, and with lack of tact and judgment. In the end how often we conform to the moral color of the community!

Perhaps we do not realize the full meaning of the kingdom of God. Christianity, so far as it serves humanity, will endure in spite of our mistakes; not so our civilization: we do not have an unlimited time in which to win our society to Christ. Two months ago the president of a large university sent me a personal letter from a distinguished professor, a great friend of President Wilson. In writing about the relation of the church to slavery when the college was founded, he gives this terrific warning:

> Now it is another combination of Church and State, the industrial belt of the North and the terrain of its operation and great business men like Rockefeller and my good friend Julius Rosenwald being the reconcilers of the irreconcilable ideas. What show does a mere minister have in a world so beset by a dogma: in 1830 the South and its privileged class; in 1930 the North and its even more far flung privileged. If the colleges do not find a way to teach contrary to their trustees' and benefactors' wishes, there will be a terrible revolution before your college celebrates its one hundred and fiftieth anniversary. There is no law of human behavior or example of history to the contrary.

We do not need to agree entirely with this prophecy to recognize that if we do not succeed in Christianizing the economic order it will go far towards dechristianizing us. Only a few days ago one of the most distinguished sociologists in America was dismissed from Ohio state university because of his liberal views. Education is a mockery where such things happen. The worst depression this country has seen for forty years is upon us; yet the president of the First National Bank of Chicago said before the International Chamber of Commerce that it was caused by the unintelligent greed of the financiers themselves. He deplored America's "lack of courageous leadership which dares to align itself with the right at the risk of being unpopular."

In the midst of such economic and spiritual bankruptcy, listen to the words of a professor whose own brother, unemployed for months, finally committed suicide: "Should my brother have been treated less kindly than a beast? Was it just, was it Christian, was it ordinary humanity, to send him forth to starve when the commercial and industrial racing had temporarily ceased? Was there not in the sight of God a contract between my brother's employer and himself that since he had served so well in the days of prosperity, the great corporation should at least grant him bread and shelter in evil days?"

No, we can never follow Jesus fully unless we share in building an economic order dedicated to the abundant life for all, even the most downward.

Jesus and the Defenceless

Jesus tried to help every class, but his main attention seemed to be given to those who were most defenceless: the children, the forsaken women, the sick, the publicans and the poor. We cannot be complete disciples of his without searching for the unpleasant facts which deny bread and beauty to the least of these our brethren. We must see things as they are, in the light of the eternal verities, and must speak what we see. Jesus did not trim. "These are hard sayings," the people said. Even his own mother and brothers thought him beside himself. Once he turned to his followers and said sadly, "Will ye also go away?"

We must dig down underneath the veneer of our

twentieth century civilization, down to the inner hearts of men, nowhere better shown than in what they do six days a week. As Jesus said: "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." When men work six days a week for material treasure, their hearts are pretty well mortgaged before the Sabbath calls them to look the other way.

We find few records in history of anyone so denouncing the unselfish accumulation and use of wealth as did Jesus. Yet we ourselves are called to serve him in the wealthiest country in the world, a country more nearly commercialized and capitalized than any other in history. It is so easy for us to say, "I will follow thee, Lord, but surely not into the complexities of our economic system. The Sunday school, the church service, of course; but I must not challenge the underlying motivations and prejudices of my people. If I am serving in the South I must not only consider but conform to racial prejudices; if I am in the North, I must not challenge our money culture or the economic morality of its leaders." Religion thus becomes an ethical opiate rather than a moral dynamic.

Jesus Shattered Complacency

It will be remembered that the Master used scathing language about the money changers in the temple: he said something about their being thieves. The clergy of his time had a vested interest in the Sabbath. Jesus shattered their complacency. No practice, no institution, no tradition, which does not make for the greatest possible good to the largest number of people can stand the test of Jesus. The time will come, if it has not already arrived, when ministers everywhere will recognize in their hearts that the acquisition and use of property is nowhere justified except as it serves the public welfare. He who throws the sanctity of "private property" about that which he has acquired or used selfishly has already lost moral title. We must awaken and sensitize the social conscience of our people until they feel injustice even to the most despised criminal or communist as they would to a brother. Today we sin collectively. If millions are unemployed, we all are guilty. If a single innocent man remains in prison, we share the blame. Jesus stunned men out of their indifference, and ever since, from St. Paul, through St. Francis, and down to Gandhi of India and Kagawa of Japan, hearts have been set on fire by his passion for righteousness.

"I will follow thee, Lord, but . . . " Perhaps hardest of all to comprehend for the American Christian, steeped as he is in a success philosophy, is the meaning of the cross. Without realizing it we make the reservations, not by the way of the cross, if that means loss of position, alienation from one's family or friends, ostracism from society. Our mental defences begin to reiterate the obvious: "Jesus did not advocate pain for the sake of pain." We are thoroughly indoctrinated with the popular dogma, "Be effective, get results." But what kind of results? The lasting varieties are those that make for the sacrifice of self in a cause worth dying for. He that would save his life must lose it. In Japan they used to copy American goods, even to the trademark, and in appearance one could not tell the difference, but the Japanese make was spurious: it would not stand the test of use. We so easily bear the Christian label without having won it through sacrifice.

To define the cross is to live the life of love. *Sacrifice in action* is the only demonstration of Christ that the world can ever understand. We must be prepared to give our lives to the uttermost in a cause that is worth the cost. Communists glory in giving their lives for their ideal; too often we simply glory in preaching Christ crucified, while living in comfort. We here must not forget our rich heritage from this very institution of sacrificial work for Christ.

Not many of us are called on to give our lives dramatically, but, as Dr. Orchard of England says, "We need to remind ourselves that there have been times when the prisons were full of the more adventurous and consistent types of Christian, and there is no evidence that these times have finally passed away. In the great struggle of the future we may find persecution returning. Indeed," says Dr. Orchard, "it is very questionable whether any out and out Christianity would not have to be suppressed by most modern states." That from the minister of the King's Weigh church is worth remembering.

Kagawa of Japan tells of his wife's sister, a beautiful young girl, who worked in the slums. She toiled unceasingly for the poor and sick. She grew pale and weak, but still faithfully continued to offer her life and her all for Christ's sake until she died. Afterwards no one thought of her as dead. "She is simply transfigured into an angel," they said. So powerful was the effect of her life on Kagawa that when he was tempted to move away from the poverty zone he dared not do it because of her.

Jesus, Moral Pioneer

How much more powerful should be the effect of the memory of Jesus on the cross! When we are tempted to do the popular thing, when we shrink from opposing injustice, when we could easily play safe, we must remember the way of the cross. To follow the Christ spirit one must be a hero as well as an idealist.

Jesus was a great pioneer in the moral realm. Why do some so readily recognize pioneers in science and in medicine, but deny them in the moral and spiritual life? It was one of the world's greatest students of Christ, Dr. Benjamin Bacon, who appraised Jesus not only by what the eye saw and the ear heard, but by what entered into the heart of man to conceive as the divine purpose. Jesus, he says, is the Son of God.

Christ has so far surpassed all other personalities which this world has ever known that men have a right to bow down in devotion and worship before him as the moral ruler of humanity. The prophets and ministers of our time sink into significance before him and it is the cross which above all else makes him Master of mankind. It is only as we follow Jesus even to the cross that we can be proof against

the barriers of convention and the commonplace, of nationalism and patriotic psychosis of our economic order with its motley lights and shadows. As we face, then, the great challenge of Jesus for our time, we dimly realize something of the tremendous task which confronts us if we would really follow him without any "ifs" or "buts." Dare we be as revolutionary as the truth, as fearless as the Christ? We will be misunderstood and persecuted; we may lose position, even life itself; but in all this we will be conquerors through him. If the cross is the central symbol of our faith, and if we take Jesus as our Master, we must be ready to experience love as he experienced it. We cannot be completely his disciples without standing side by side with him in the shadow of the cross. Throughout our lives, then, we should say, "I will follow thee, Lord," wherever and whenever love calls, even to the cross.

The Patriot Who Became the Prophet

By William E. Brooks

In the year that King Uzziah died I saw also the Lord. Isaiah 6:1.

THESE words have been much with me in these exigent days through which we are passing. For they were exigent days for Jerusalem, those in which the patriot had his vision and became the prophet. Uzziah had been a great king in Judah. His powerful arm and statesmanslike brain had established his nation in a secure place. Her borders had been widened, she had won a new place in the council of the nations, her riches had increased along with her prestige. And in the minds of many, as in that of the young nobleman Isaiah, the king had become the synonym for the nation's security, the guarantor of her prestige. Then the king died. The thing on which Isaiah had depended was taken away. He was in despair. And in that hour of despair he went to the temple. Perhaps it was merely an old habit asserting itself. Perhaps some one met him, and saw the darkness on his face, and with rare insight asked, "Haven't you forgotten God?" Anyway he went. And there he had the vision, the vision through which the patriot became the prophet, the narrow nationalist the seer who saw God high and lifted up above all things, greater than kings, mightier than all earthly forces, and far beyond the narrow confines of any temple's walls or any land's possession. The hour of despair became the hour of strange and transforming illumination.

There is something in that story for America. For have we not, like the young Isaiah, been putting our trust in the things we had seen with our own eyes, in our wealth and in our power, in the strength of our resources, in the skill of our financiers and our statesmen? We thought ourselves secure, so secure that the strain of untoward years could never disturb us. And like Isaiah we had forgotten God. Our might was our king. Now the king is gone. That on which we trusted has vanished from before our eyes. Perhaps, if we will go to the temple, we too can have our vision, and find a new trust in old things, and become the prophet nation that the fathers dreamed we might be and that the world sorely needs.

Trust in Things

Sometimes I think we have been guilty of a false emphasis in our religious life. We have been thinking too much of the work we had to do and the perfecting of an organization with which to do it. And these undoubtedly have their place. It is not hard to understand why this was so. It was all a part of the system. Being absorbed in things we had made our very religion a matter of things. We went to the temple to offer sacrifice, forgetting the meaning of the sacrifice and the God who was greater than the temple. No doubt Isaiah did the same while Uzziah sat securely on his throne and his cavalry guarded the outposts. But the primary thing in religion is to see God and to know that he cares. We have a saying that the only sure thing is trouble. There is one thing more sure and that is the love of God. But how much of a fact is that love of God to the present generation of Americans?

It is quite possible that what the British preacher, Dr. Arthur J. Gossip, writes of his own people is true of us: "This generation with its Bible still unread is living upon the rumors of the faith blown to its from its fathers' time." That is what Isaiah had been doing. But when the king died he saw the Lord. When the temporal had been taken away his thoughts were fixed once more upon the eternal, the eternal that had been always there, but that he had been too engrossed to think about. His eyes were now lifted high enough to see the eternal.

I had an experience a short time ago, which illustrates what I mean. I was standing one evening on the deck of a ferry boat coming down the North river on my way to my train at Jersey City. My eyes were full of that splendor of lights where the great towers of the city are sky-lifted in the night. The boat slipped on down the river and the train carried me away across the Jersey flats and the lights were gone. But looking out the car windows through the dark I saw in the east, from which the lights had vanished, the glowing splendor of the evening star. High and lifted up it was and no little earthly change could dim its glory. It had been there before, but I had been too engrossed with the earth lights to see it.

God is always there—with his peace, even though America has been too absorbed to see him. I often think of that troubled company gathered in that upper room, and one was speaking to them who had been their friend and now was going away. "I have not much to give you," he said, "but I can give you peace." He gave it because he had it. The thing which in the

moment of dejection was revealed to Isaiah was the commonplace of his days. And because he saw that, nothing could vex his peace. Troubled America needs that. It does need new economic policies as it needs many things. But more than all else it needs to come, as Isaiah came, with the realization that the things in which it trusted have gone, to find what he found. God will not settle our problems for us, but he will give us quiet hearts and a new point of view through which to settle them ourselves, to address ourselves to the task which lies before us.

Isaiah went out from that temple not only with a

William E. Brooks

fresh sense of God, but with the realization that he was infinitely more than a mere tribal deity, the possession of a favored few. Israel had thought of him as securely shut up on that inmost holy place, ready to work wonders for them because his interest was in them. But Isaiah saw that only the skirt of his garment was in the temple, that he was central in all the universe, high and lifted up. All men were his and Isaiah's task was to make straight in the desert of life a highway for his feet.

It takes a tremendous circumstance to arouse a man like him to that realization. It must have been amazingly disturbing. What he had been thinking of before was the security of Israel under Uzziah. What he was to think of now was the establishment of the kingdom of God that was to cover the whole earth. The patriot had become the prophet. The change began in the realization of the failure of things in which he had trusted. It went through a new realization of the only sure Power to discover how that Power embraced all men in its desires and in its plan. So that when the Lord asked for a messenger to declare his word he was ready.

The same narrow nationalism that was Isaiah's has laid its hold upon America. We have shut ourselves within our walls as though God were alone interested in us. For a splendid moment when the war was upon us we thought of the rest of the world. I am not among those who think we were merely driven by the sense of our necessity when we began that great adventure that took two million of our youth beyond the seas. I hate war as strongly as does any man, but I served with that army in those days that now seem so far away and I know the thought that was in the heart of many of them as I bade them good-bye before they went down to where the transports waited to carry them away. I remember one young captain who took my hands in his and said, "Padre, this is the greatest day and the hardest day in my life. This morning I said good-bye to my wife and my baby and tonight I am going over there to do this thing for them." For them and for thousands of others he had never seen! We wanted then to make the world a better world, a safer world. But the dream died and we shut ourselves within ourselves and built our walls higher and forgot all else but our own advantages and our own gain.

Shutting God Out

But those walls have not yet been able to keep trouble out when it covered the world. If in this trouble we turn again to the temple and see the vision of God's face, it is quite likely that we shall make the astonishing discovery that Isaiah did—that if God is big enough to be trusted by us he is big enough to be trusted by all, and that therefore we cannot shut him into our own holy places, but that he rules high and lifted up, over all, caring for all. If that be so, it must necessarily follow that his interests are not alone embraced by the narrow confines of our own land and that therefore ours should not be.

There are many arguments that men are bringing forth to induce Americans to think of the needs of others beyond our borders and of our responsibilities for them. Every international gathering that is held is seeking in some way to press these needs upon our thinking. But we, like Isaiah, have been content to think ourselves secure while the king was on the throne and therefore not responsible for anything beyond the seas that shut us in. So all arguments have had little effect upon us. We have raised our tariffs higher, we have gone on collecting our debts, we have shut ourselves out of councils and leagues. But the thing that awakened Isaiah, the vision of the Universal God, came to him in his distress. Pray God it may come to us in ours.

But you say to me that the time of visions is past. Is it? I grant that it has seemed so in these latter years. I did not see the star when the lights in the high towers were gleaming but that did not prove that it was not there—I was simply watching other things. The fact that we have not seen the vision does not

prove it is not there. There is a word of Francis Thompson's which has a meaning for us:

> Not where the wheeling systems darken,
> And our benumbed conceiving soars—
> The drift of pinions, would we hearken,
> Beats at our own clay-shuttered doors.
>
> The angels keep their ancient places,
> Stir but a stone and start a wing!
> 'Tis ye, 'tis your estrangéd faces,
> That miss the many-splendored thing.

God had always been there every time Isaiah had gone to the temple. It was his "estranged face" that had missed the vision, until, in the hour when other things failed, he saw the sight. God is thrusting himself before us in these tragic days to be seen. The future of many things depends upon whether we will see, and whether we will heed.

Living Dangerously

By Herbert B. Hudnut

"... *hazarding his life.*" *Philippians* 2:30.

IN an address which M. Tardieu delivered to 3,000 veterans of the world war, he said that France had lost a great deal during the eleven years since the armistice because she was not on the alert. Her policy has been characterized by extreme inertia. He called the man-power of the nation to the same enthusiasm, vigor and self-sacrifice which was the rule during the war years. His words carried a challenge to *live dangerously*.

Our history is replete with the names of great heroes, none greater than that of our first President. Washington trained himself for exceptional leadership. He dared to be unique as a general and as a statesmen. On the walls at Mt. Vernon you may read the inscription by a noted English philanthropist, Dr. Andrew Reed, written in 1833: "Washington, the brave—the wise—the good. Washington, supreme in War, in Council and in Peace. Washington, valiant without ambition — discreet without fear — confident without presumption. Washington, in disaster calm, in success moderate, in all, himself. Washington, the Hero—the Patriot—the Christian. The Friend of Nations, the Friend of Mankind, who, when he had won all, renounced all, and sought, in the bosom of his Family and of Nature, Retirement—and in the Hope of Religion, Immortality." In spite of the writers who delight in bringing dishonor to his name, he stands forth as one who lived dangerously.

A Modern Hero

Rear Admiral Richard Byrd returned last year from an intrepid expedition to the South Pole. The world was interested in his courage for the sake of scientific discoveries. An amateur radio operator in Schenectady was in constant communication with this expedition. He told of the thrilling messages that came back from that land of everlasting cold. Little America saw some dangerous living.

Regardless of the number of such cases, they are relatively small and we are tempted to ask the question, "Should there not be more?" Must we wait for great crises to produce national heroes? Does scientific research have to cool its heels in the anteroom of some "Foundation" in order to secure equipment for an expedition into the unknown? The late Myron T. Herrick had an ideal for the youth of America which ought to be taught in our schools. It is found in a letter which he wrote to Dr. Drury of St. Paul's School about his grandson, Parmely, Jr. He told this lad that it is not sufficient just to make money; he must justify his existence by making a place for himself in the world along a different road. Herrick told him that if he failed in this he would be a slacker. He further pointed out the call of our country for men who would again place the nation first, business and society afterwards.

These are all instances of men who lived face to face with danger, in fields other than religion. Such national heroes are indispensable mainstays of government. They are corner-stones of the ideal state which we are trying to build. We are interested in them because their courage parallels the sort that we look for in every Christian life. If it is missing, then Christianity, for that person, has lost its fire. The torch has somehow gone out. The bearer has nothing worthwhile to hand on—just a bundle of old twigs, burned out at the end.

Why the Timidity of Christians?

We are raising quite a problem when we try to find out why there are not more people who are willing to live dangerously for Christ. Let me suggest a few of the answers.

In the first place, they do not understand the implications of his message. That is because the church has often obscured the real issues and been concerned with organization and maintenance while missing the Master of Life as he hurries by, intent on meeting spiritual need. Secondly, they feel that exceptional characters are needed, and they consider themselves rather mediocre—so any effort is useless. Such "passivism" never blunders, for it is too quiescent. But it can scarcely be called Christianity; it is closer to Nirvana than heaven. As someone has said for their benefit: "It does not take much of a man to be a Christian —but it takes all there is of him." In the third place, they are disobedient to their heavenly visions. They see some superlative good which they might accomplish if they would only go forward, but they slink away from it. Then in the fourth place, as Dean Sturges remarks: "There are the people who stand outside the Christian church because they are waiting for an ideal church to join. They want a flawless creed. They wait for a fellowship composed of men and women who are perfect and perfectly right, and until they find it their chief religious exercise is the criticism of

religion and the church. I have little sympathy for them. God never furnishes us the finished and the complete. He furnishes us the actual to deal with, that out of it we may build some glimpse and intimation of his eternal ideal."

We did not come together, however, to spend a lot of time thinking of excuses. They might deflect our ideals. We did come to encourage one another and to realize that there has never been a time when men were more greatly needed to do their bit of dangerous living. It is an exploded theory, of course, that men can only be heroes on a battle field. As a matter of fact,

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war presents so many handicaps that it usually turns men into moral defectives instead of heroes. The men who fought and died gloriously did so in spite of war and not because of it. It would be a good thing if the President would send a copy of "All Quiet on the Western Front" to every senator, ambassador or public official who still sets any store by war. Perhaps when those important individuals read what war does to human personality, they would not be so eager to build 8-inch guns for our fleet. It is as true today as when Benjamin Disraeli said it, that "war is never a solution."

One of Paul's friends seems to have caught this magnificent quality of courage from his leaders, Jesus and the great apostle. Paul sent him off with a letter to the church at Philippi, and wrote: "Give him a hearty Christian welcome, value men like him very highly, for he nearly died in the service of Christ by risking his life." That man's name was Epaphroditus, and it will not be forgotten as long as we delight to honor men who dare to be brave.

The strength to live dangerously day after day, week after week, is more to be desired than fine gold. It never comes by accident but rather by setting one's heart toward it and striving to achieve it. I doubt if anyone is successful in this respect unless he has pretty well in mind the direction for his life. What is my life? What shall I make of it? Does it make any difference whether I squander it or not—whether I am a coward or risk my life for Christ?

Risking One's Life

Epaphroditus had evidently come to a very definite conclusion about his own life. Paul said he "did not regard his life." That phrase came from the language of the gambler. Paul had watched his Roman guards take risks in reckless fashion and he applied this word to his friend. It was a great compliment. This was exactly what Paul had himself done, deliberately gambled with his life. For the sake of Christ and the church, he had flung caution to the winds at the time of his first enlistment. And so he admired the same quality in Epaphroditus, who probably had strict doctor's orders against making the journey. Had he played for safety he would have remained at home. They were kindred spirits and did not stop performing any task simply because there were risks to be taken. Paul described his own experience in these words: "I hold not my life of any account as dear unto myself, so that I may accomplish my course," and again, "I am ready not to be bound only but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus."

This disregard of one's own life is inherent in all Christian service. There is a certain joy in living dangerously. It is one of the first fruits of the spirit. Through the passion of our Lord, the disciples were very cautious. In the upper room, before Pentecost, they were very careful about their lives, meeting behind barred doors for fear of the Jews. Then came the night of the Holy Spirit—a rushing wind that swept away their fear and timidity and caution. They were ready to throw their lives away for a cause and men "took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus." Peter, who had denied Jesus—Peter, who had almost lost his soul, became sublimely reckless. All great servants of humanity have had that spiritual mark: St. Francis had it when he kissed the leper, Luther had it when he would go to Worms "though the devils were thick as the tiles upon the housetops." No one is thoroughly equipped for service until, like Epaphroditus, he is ready to risk his life.

Faith and Danger

Jesus certainly had this quality in mind when he exclaimed: "Whosoever would save his life shall lose it and whosoever shall lose his life for my sake shall save it." It is true of the life of the intellect as well as the life of action. To live by faith in Christ is always to live dangerously. It means a decision as to whether life is good or bad. The result of such a decision tempers the quality of iron that is in your character. Of course, if life is a bad thing after all,

if there are no positive values, if the game is not worth the candle, then our thinking will be definitely destructive and we will build a civilization in harmony with our lack of faith. If we could see it before we were finished with it, we would not go along with our building.

Lord Kelvin said there came a point in all of his discoveries when he had to take a leap in the dark. To commit ourselves to Christ unreservedly is the biggest venture in the world. When we take this leap in the dark, we find no darkness at all, but "the Way, the Truth, and the Life and the Light." I have come to think of the meaning and message of Jesus as a beautiful proposal which he makes to us one by one, in some such words as these from the British Weekly:

> I have been waiting for you here a long time now. I have not interfered. You have made your experiments with life. You have tried this and that and you know how you feel. You know, if what you feel now is a prophecy of what you will feel later, what a sad and hopeless thing life is going to be to you farther on, and especially at the last. Why, then, not take My way? Why not come My way? Why not believe what I believe and admit to your soul what I admitted to Mine. Life was not an easy thing for Me. I knew what it was to be hungry, to be rejected, to fail. I had both the assistance and the hurt of friends. Death took Me brutally while I was still young. I also might have spoken foolishly concerning God. But here is My testimony, My experience, which I invite you to share. I was never bitter and I was never alone. When death came—and I was able to watch it coming—He whom I had served and loved as Father came so near to Me that with My last breath I gave Myself away to Him.

This is a decision each of us must make alone. Would to God that I could make it for each of you! For I think I understand how serious it is and how important it is that we should not lose our lives in the pursuit of luxury or ease or stupid complacency.

Let me suggest next that if we live dangerously, most of us will have to be far more independent in our thinking than we have ever been in the past. I do not know why we are content with limited horizons when the universe seems to beckon us out into limitless space and eternal thoughts. I do not know why we are content with "meanly considering mean things," as Thackeray says of the snob. I do not know why we learn the lockstep of the Middletown inhabitants and hustle about so rapidly that we never have time for culture or the development of an original philosophy. I do not know why we never stop to get caught up ourselves, to hear Isaiah say, "In quietness and confidence shall be your strength," or the voice of Tolstoy crying: "In the name of God, stop a moment, cease your work and look around you."

Thinking Straight

But I do know that we will not begin to live dangerously so long as our thinking and notions are dictated or speeded up by a pack of machine-made robots. A young Japanese vice-admiral had gone up the ladder of promotion very rapidly. One of our missionaries congratulated him. "Almost impatiently he swept it aside with a gesture, and said, 'I don't care much about such promotions, but what I do care about is that I become a better Christian.'" Such a life has work that must be done in this world. It welcomes new ideas even though they come from Russia. It makes friends with persons who may have a different skin color and who may be extremely poor. It is not afraid to face any situation with the idea, "Perhaps I can help!" or with the thought that there is always a discoverable right in every struggle between ideas or peoples or classes.

That minister of England was right who dared to say: "Our greatest need is men and women with the power of sustained indignation at the social abuses of our times." Such persons are not content with the world as it is today and they will not be "complacent in the face of manifest inequalities." When I say that we need to think alone on these great problems, I do not mean that we shall close our minds to new truth —not at all—the adventurous life will always be eager for new ideas. I doubt if it ever closes and bars any door, saying with finality, "Well, that is the end of that." It holds a loophole for escape, like the small boy's definition of a circle: "A circle is two lines that go around and meet at the ends and then go on without ever ending."

Just at present there is a great opportunity for all of us to think straight on some national problems. Such thinking will have to go beyond theorizing to accomplish any results, but it will be in the class of dangerous living. A man does not have to be a martyr to be in this class. Some prophets have been respected and loved by their generations even though they did not regard their own lives but thought first and sacrificially of their brothers "living in an earthly hell."

Prohibition is such a problem. Joining a vociferous law-breakers' union is not going to advance the cause of good will or brotherhood in America. Neither will cursing the bootleggers help an ardent dry to understand his brother. We must admit that this is a serious problem which will not be settled by demagogues, nor is it apparently a clear-cut issue on any one of a number of points. I have sufficient confidence in my country to believe that it will be settled by persons who are willing to seek out the right of the problem and stand alone in their communities if need be that the kingdom of God may be advanced. If prohibition is not a moral advance for humanity, leading out into a larger freedom, then I am willing for us to go back, if necessary, to colonial days when liquor was currency, and start in all over again. If, however, the manufacture and sale of intoxicating liquor are morally wrong and hindrances to the coming of Christ's kingdom, then I think we should hold our ground.

Unemployment is such a problem. Neither labor nor capital has the last word to say, but humanity has. Somewhere in the back of our consciousness there must be fixed a religious law—perhaps economic as well—that speaks of loving God as a man's first priv-

ilege and loving his neighbor as his second. If a solution is sought on the basis of such laws, our independent thinking will lead to such conclusions: (1) "Man does not live by bread alone," but he needs some bread, at least a living wage. (2) "Rest comes at last," but most men would rather "wear out than rust out." (3) America is rich enough to guarantee every man continuous employment throughout the years of his life and an old-age pension when he is unable to support himself (not at that ancient old-age level which industry seems to maintain today, 45 years).

There are other problems which time does not allow us to discuss, the question as to whether politicians will ever bind the nation together by international good will instead of battleships, questions about personal religion, amusements, conservation of national resources, prison reform, crime investigation—questions enough and vital enough to challenge all of us to dangerous living. But before that will happen, there must be a more complete consecration of self to the ideal of service.

The Forces of Jesus

Our Lord Jesus organized an army for this purpose. He left his entire program for that army to carry out, and what a strange army it was! Eleven cowards, one traitor, a few women—one of them dropped in two mites in a temple box because she trusted God to take care of her after she gave him all that she had, a couple of strange Greeks, one or two priests who had loved the darkness, lots of children who loved the sunshine, outcasts, men who had been sinners, the devil's castaways, the afflicted, the poor—and only one great scholar. Those were the organized forces of Christianity as Jesus left them when he went to the cross saying, "It is finished."

Oh, the marvel of that story—through such a small handful Jesus would work out so great salvation! But it is coming true. Our Lord is marching on, and with him the same sort of an army. Not many of the great ones in the world, but many who are living dangerously for him. Mark gives us an interesting sidelight on the disciples: "And they were on the way, going up to Jerusalem, and Jesus was going before them: and they were amazed; and they that followed were afraid." They were afraid and yet in spite of their fears they followed him. In that temper of spirit, any man can live dangerously. F. W. H. Myers describes the experience as the Inner Light:

Whoso has felt the Spirit of the Highest
Cannot confound nor doubt Him nor deny:
Yea, with one voice, O world, though thou deniest,
Stand thou on that side, for on this am I.

Rather the earth shall doubt when her retrieving
Pours in the rain and rushes from the sod.
Rather than he for whom the great conceiving
Stirs in his soul to quicken into God.

Ay, though thou then shouldst strike from him his glory,
Blind and tormented, maddened and alone,
Even on the cross would he maintain his story,
Yes, and in hell would whisper, I have known.

Can We Be Sure?

By Ivan Lee Holt

Art thou he that cometh or look we for another? Luke 7:19.

ONE of the prophets of our day has written: "The scientist is more interested in the pursuit of truth than in truth itself. But it is very truth that the religious man desires with the deepest cravings of his nature." In other words, science is like a game of seeking truth and it excludes all those interests and objects which would interfere with the technique of the activity. "If science should attain the final truth about God and the technique of close contact with him, religion would take over these findings and use them continuously and gloriously. But science would drop the matter entirely once the truth had been found."

Religion earnestly seeks the truth, and it is not deeply interested in the technique of the search. Religion desires certainty and would exclaim with Paul, "I know whom I have believed." The disciples of John came from their disturbed Master with the question, "Art thou he?" They must know. Jesus pointed to the things done and urged that a report of them be taken to John. "Here is the evidence—I am the truth."

Is Jesus Really Savior?

John expected a fiery judgment and a great national repentance; the expected things had not come to pass and John was perplexed. Our own age is raising the question of John. Nations have not turned about in repentance, the world has not been saved from war with all our technique for peace, and the masses of humanity are interested only in material things. Can Christianity save the world? Is Jesus really the Savior of humankind? Dr. Knudson writes: "In Rome Christianity descended into an ecclesiasticism, in Greece it became a philosophy, in Germany it became a system of doctrine, in England it became the religious side of imperialism, in America it is being reduced to Rotarianism." Rotarianism has a place in our American life, but it is a tragedy to substitute it for the Christian religion, or regard it as a full and sufficient expression of that religion. Is the church to become a social service agency, and a weak one at that?

One must be fair enough to say that many generations of Christians have raised similar questions. In my reading recently I have run across these quotations:

The world is very evil;
The times are waxing late;
Be sober and keep vigil,
The Judge is at the gate.

It has come, I know not how, to be taken for granted, by many persons, that Christianity is not so much a subject of inquiry, but that it is now at length discerned to be fictitious.

I have lived to see that final crisis, when religion hath lost its hold on the minds of the people.

The church, as it now stands, no human power can save.

One is not surprised to read such messages in the writing of this modern day, for it is a time of cynicism. But these quotations do not belong to this modern day! The poem "The world is very evil" was written by Bernard of Cluny in the middle of the twelfth century. His age was followed by the great revival of the thirteenth century, the rise of the Franciscan and Dominican orders.

The second quotation is from an advertisement of Butler's Analogy, published in 1726: "It has come, I know not how, to be taken for granted, by many persons, that Christianity is not so much a subject of inquiry, but that it is now at length discerned to be fictitious." The third quotation, "I have lived to see that final crisis, when religion hath lost its hold on the minds of the people," comes from the period of the publication of Butler's Analogy, and is the word of a publicist of that day. That period was followed by the evangelical revival and the rise of Methodism!

The fourth quotation, "The church, as it now stands, no human power can save," is from the pen of the great Dr. Arnold in the last century. His period was followed by the Tractarian movement in a revival of mysticism and spirituality.

Some False Conclusions

In revealing thus the similarity between this crisis and earlier ones it is easy to draw wrong conclusions. One false conclusion is that a revival must follow such a time as this in which we live; revivals do not come to those who wait for them with folded hands. Another false conclusion would be: "We should not worry. Times are not worse than they used to be, and things are not as bad as they seem." In every time of spiritual distress, followed by a revival of religion, there were great souls who "discerned the issues, raised the alarm, and called for a new movement of repentance and faith." To one not blind there are some distressing situations in our religious life. In the first place, there has been some decrease of interest in the public observance of religion. The attendance at religious services is not uniformly large, and most Christian denominations are just holding their numbers. It is often alleged that there is much of Christianity outside the church. Undoubtedly this is true! But one wonders how much of personal conviction and private devotion is to be found among these on the outside.

We are fond of referring to the religious interest of our day as evidenced by newspaper discussions and magazine articles. It may be that the tentative and hesitating attitude of such articles is an indication of the weakness and vagueness of religious interest.

The most distressing of all situations is the attitude of many of the faithful remnant. They are not very courageous in their attack on sin, nor very sure of their own faith. What is one to believe? Is there a triumph of righteousness? Does God care? These are typical questions of faithful members of the Christian church.

Any estimate of the state of religion would be unfair if it did not call attention to another side of the picture. In the first place, multitudes are maintaining happiness amid difficult circumstances, and are ready to help others less fortunate. In the second place, as a whole people still believe in God, have a profound reverence for Jesus and his teaching, and maintain lofty aspirations.

Faith and Reason

As one looks at such manifestations of religious interest he takes courage, but he must ask this question: How much of it can be passed on? How much of it

Sid Whiting Portrait

IVAN LEE HOLT

is too inchoate and ephemeral to last? How much of it is strong enough to withstand the attacks of these days? Faith must be rationally grounded and have some authoritative pronouncements; the hopes of humanity must be shown to be supported by the purposes of God; the human heart must find some sympathy in the universe! To come from general terms to personal experience, everyone of you must have: (1) authority, (2) an assurance of the triumph of righteousness, (3) an experience of God's love. Your need is the need of every other human soul. You remember Plutarch's famous sentence: "Traversing the world, you may find towns without coin, without schools, without theaters; but a town without a temple of prayer no one ever saw." Can man get along without religion? It seems almost as foolish as raising the question: Can man get along without eating or breathing? Millions seek to find their way to God, in the most ardent search man makes, and the need is always the same—some "Thus saith the Lord," some "The righteous cause will win," some "God is ever mindful of his children."

There are some who think that the Christian religion can never again bring the assurance of earlier days. They are saying: "It is a temporary phase of religion and has served its day. It is one of the historic religions, and in the course of evolution it is passing. It will be succeeded by some other faith with less austere morality and a different foundation of belief." In answer one can reply: "The new movements are pathetic and pitiful, and must show far more of fervor and of hope if they would satisfy human beings."

There are those who expect a reincarnation of Christ. In India a religious leader is spoken of as a Christ, but each one called by that name seems so small as over against Jesus of Nazareth.

A New Religion?

There are those who would shape a new religion out of all the great religions. A layman of my own church recently handed me a sketch of such a composite religion he had worked out. But religions are not made in business offices or rooms for study. They are born in great human experiences. If the highest has gone wrong, is there any hope for a composite religion?

In writing of the finality of Jesus Christ, Dr. W. E. Orchard says:

> (1) The finality of Christ does not mean that the Christian revelation is exhausted. One can believe that Christ is the finest expression of God we will ever see in this world and yet know that there are vast realms of thought yet to be explored with the principles of Christ as our guide.
>
> (2) Christianity is final because there is nothing final about it. In ethics it replaces law by principle and goes beyond justice to love and mercy.
>
> (3) The discoveries of our day are promising. We have come to know Jesus of Nazareth as no other generation. Science is granting that the measurement of reality must be qualitative as well as quantitative. The religion of Jesus is the finest qualitative measure of the world and life.

The Christ of fact and the Christ of experience complement each other in our faith. He is historical; he is ever present. How clearly the author of John's gospel presents him as both historical and ever present! The author of that gospel had to reinterpret Jesus, the teacher of Galilee, for men and women of the great Graeco-Roman city of Ephesus. He insists on the historic Jesus, and lays emphasis on that fact. At the same time he is sure that the human needs of water, bread, light, and life can be adequately met by him who is the living water, the bread from heaven, the light of the world, and the eternal life. In Ephesus or in America this is true: "When religion comes to us bending in lowly services, healing our wounds of body and soul, speaking to our drooping spirits and making them live again, and showing us the Father, then we bow at the feet of religion forever captivated."

Says Coleridge: "No one has ever said that he has given Christianity a fair trial and found it to fail." There are many indications of a disillusionment that is coming to those who have discarded religion and insisted that Jesus belongs to the myths of the race.

> She set a rose to blossom in her hair
> The day Faith died—
> "Now glad," she said, "and free, at last, I go
> And life is wide."
> But through long nights she stared into the dark
> And knew she lied.

Out of his many contacts in India, Stanley Jones finds that "The place of certainty is at the junction where Jesus of history becomes the Christ of experience, and where the resultant individual experience is corroborated and corrected by the collective experience."

Science and Humanism

In protesting against the assertiveness of a science that would explain all and that type of current humanism that would cast religion to the scrap heap, Dr. William L. Sullivan writes: "An ill-educated nation is being led to believe such nonsense as that a trained modern intelligence cannot accept God any longer. It is strange indeed that the dilettante should select religion as the region of his casual holiday. Religion is the first beautiful companion that man encountered in his wilderness. It is the pathway between life and death that is worn deepest by the feet of perpetually seeking generations. It is never far away when man knows exaltation and rapture. It is always present when he transcends himself in unearthly consecrations. It opens the door of vision when his genius hungers and thirsts for the substance behind all symbols, and other hand that can open it there is none. It is by his side when he walks the high and lonely places where he makes the discovery of himself. In life it is with him, illuminating him at his noblest, scourging him at his basest—the latter presence even more wistfully loved than the former. Neither in death does it leave him; but when all other voices mourn of irreparable defeat, it alone lifts the cry of defiance and stands on the ruins of mortality announcing mysterious and splendid victory for the fallen."

Fearing that they were not entirely satisfied by the evidence presented by his words and life, Jesus once asked his disciples whether they would turn away in their disappointment, "Will ye also go away?" Quickly Peter answered, "To whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life." As we seek to know God today no other message can bring such assurance and peace as "God is like Jesus Christ."

Sympathy

> ASK God to give thee skill
> In comfort's art,
> That thou may'st consecrated be
> And set apart
> Unto a life or sympathy,
> For heavy is the weight of ill
> In every heart;
> And comforters are needed much
> Of Christlike touch.

A. E. Hamilton.

Is Right Relative?

By Rolland W. Schloerb

Do not suppose that I have come to do away with the Law and the Prophets. I have not come to do away with them but to enforce them. Matthew 5:17.

A TEACHER was telling his class of the changes that occur in thought and outlook from generation to generation. He pointed out to them that what appeared true two hundred years ago is no longer true for us. A course of conduct which was considered right two centuries ago is not considered right now.

At this point he was interrupted by a student. "If things which were considered true two hundred years ago are no longer regarded as true by us, then in all probability the things which we regard as true now will not be considered true two hundred years from now." The professor assented. The student then made this further remark: "If what is true now will be false two hundred years from now, then the whole matter of truth and right is relative to our time."

This conversation in a class room brings out one of the problems which we must face today. For countless people, right and wrong are considered relative matters. No absolute standard of right is recognized. Conceptions of morality change from time to time, and these standards are relative to the age in which they are held. Under these circumstances, it is not to be wondered at that conviction disappears. If what is right today will not be considered right tomorrow, why become enthusiastic about following it? Since it is all temporary, it has no authority over us. We can have little respect for the standards of the past because they have been outgrown and we can cherish little regard for the standards of the present because we know that they will become outworn. So we must ask ourselves, "Is right relative?"

I

The attitude of Jesus toward the Old Testament must have given his contemporaries the idea that he believed in a relative morality. They saw that he did not have a complete devotion to the letter of the law. He did not hesitate to go beyond it. For him the sayings of the elders did not give a final statement of the moral life. He often contrasted what was said of old time with what he thought was right when he spoke.

The religious leaders of his day could not understand that attitude toward the moral law. In their eyes Jesus was undermining sacred standards. If one could tamper with divine commands in that way, what would the end be? If God did not speak once for all, how could one know which precepts were God-given and which were not? All morality would be simply relative and nothing could be depended upon with absoluteness. So Jesus' contemporaries were consistently attached to the law of Moses. The scribes spent much time in accurate copy work. They displayed a devotion to these maxims which showed that they did not regard the moral law as a relative matter. For them it was the "word of God." They could not agree with the approach of Jesus to the law of old time.

But this was the astonishing feature of Jesus' position: With all of his willingness to go beyond the Old Testament law, and with all of his boldness in contrasting his own standards with those of the law of Moses, he insisted that he had an intense loyalty to the Old Testament. He did not cast it aside cynically, nor did he seek to discredit it in the eyes of these people. He used positive words to show his regard for the efforts of past leaders. "Do not suppose that I have come to do away with the law or the prophets. . . . For I tell you, as long as heaven and earth endure, not one dotting of an i or crossing of a t will be dropped from the law until it is all observed." His remarks do not indicate carelessness with the standards of yesterday nor cynicism about all moral standards.

We therefore turn eagerly to discover the position of Jesus, for he seems to have two essential attitudes for the development of a wholesome morality. On the one hand, he saw that standards change. The old could not be aped blindly. Changed times bring changed outlooks. Of that we are convinced today. Conduct which was unrebuked in the past is frowned upon now. Once slavery was accepted as a good thing. Today it is regarded as bad. Once war was considered good. Now an increased moral sensitiveness is changing that estimate. An age that has become conscious of change must be attracted to Jesus because he recognized the need of freeing oneself from blind devotion to the past.

On the other hand, Jesus displayed another needed characteristic in an atmosphere of change. He retained his respect for the past. Instead of the fact of change lessening his enthusiasm for what he regarded as right, it made him more enthusiastic. The fact of change in moral outlook did not destroy conviction. He spoke with authority. So we ask ourselves, "How can one believe in changing moral standards and still retain an enthusiastic loyalty to what one accepts as right in the present?"

II

A simple picture may be used to clarify the outlook of Jesus. It is a picture of a stairway. It consists of many steps. No step is to be regarded as the landing. Each step is good in itself as a step. A higher step can hardly say to a lower step, "I have no need of thee." Each one is good as a part of a process. As Jesus looked back over the history of the best thought and aspiration of his race, he saw there certain steps in moral standards. Each generation stood upon certain principles. For the people of that time these principles were absolutely right. They called those precepts the "word of God." And so they were. *There is an absoluteness for each generation in the best of which it is capable.* Nothing is detracted from the validity of a position to state that it will be superseded by a better. As a last step in a growing experience its claims are absolute.

This meant that Jesus could have a high appreciation for the conviction of old time. In the Old Testament there was a law which stated, "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth." Such a principle was not something to be sneered at. As a step in the process it was significant. An increasing regard for the worth of personality was emerging. One could not wantonly take the head of a person who had inadvertently knocked a tooth out of a neighbor's mouth. Justice by taking only an eye for an eye and only a tooth for a tooth is better than indiscriminate revenge. For the people who had arrived at this conviction there was an

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absolute demand upon them. It was their best to that time. But Jesus' respect for this position lay simply in his regard for it as a step. Good as a step, but not good as a landing! It was leading somewhere and it needed to be "fulfilled." Since it was leading in the direction of greater regard for human personality, it had its place and purpose, but he suggests now that the disposition to love and the willingness to suffer were more ultimate standards.

Another command was given of old. "You must love your neighbor and hate your enemy." A good step! Certainly it was better than having an attitude of hatred toward everyone. Some group life was possible if people were kind to those who were kind to them. But it was a step—a step in the direction of a more inclusive human fellowship. Jesus fulfills it by giving this higher standard, "Love your enemies, and pray for your persecutors."

However, with all of his appreciation for the Old Testament, Jesus could not follow the course of the scribes and pharisees of his day. The sayings of the elders were no absolute standard for him. He did not believe that one should slavishly follow them. The person who was truest to the Old Testament was the one who could see whither it led and help to fulfill it. Its standards were steps, not landing places. And as Jesus looked forward to the future, he saw even greater works to be done by those who came after him, for each age would need to fulfill the law of love of God and man.

III

In an age when so much is considered relative, Jesus' way of approaching changing standards can help us. It will help us to retain a wholesome appreciation for the best that has been thought and done in the past, and it will give us more zest for the part which we must play in the ascending steps of a kingdom of God. We cannot be satisfied with a mere sagging back into old precepts that have been outgrown by the changing life of our time. With this view in mind, let us look at a few of the outstanding problems of today.

Think of the economic system of *capitalism*. For anyone without historical perspective, it is felt that we have always lived in a capitalistic civilization. People have always owned private property. People have always worked for profit. The tools of production have always been privately owned. And so capitalism is accepted as good. On the other hand, there are those who believe that capitalism is wrong. Under this system there is waste and exploitation and inequality. Therefore there are ardent advocates and equally ardent opponents of capitalism.

If we were to follow the attitude of Jesus, we should be eager to see the good that lies in the system. We should endeavor to see the step which its adoption represented. And perhaps we should discover that it was a great advance over some of the older systems. But we might make the further discovery that it is not something eternal and final. It is not an absolute system. And we might agree with the thesis of a book by Beatrice and Sydney Webb, that up to a certain time the advantages of the capitalistic system outweighed its disadvantages, but since that time its weaknesses were greater than its strength. The time has come or may come when those who want to fulfill its deepest aims will need to change it. Good as a step, but not as a landing!

Consider *nationalism!* We live in a period of strong national loyalties. The nation is the modern idol. Its call has been the supreme call to men. This high estimate of the nation was again dramatized over the South Pole last year. When Byrd and his men flew over the South Pole, what did they drop from the plane? Attached to the stone from Floyd Bennett's grave was an American flag. They might have dropped something glorifying themselves—a tablet with their names. "I, King Sargon, have built me this palace for my own glory." Or they might have used a symbol of their family or tribe. Instead, they dropped the symbol of a nation.

Is nationalism bad? It is far better than many other group loyalties. As a step it represents progress,

but who can regard it as the end? Will not the time come when men shall say, "You have heard it said of old time, 'Thou shalt be loyal to thy nation above all else,' but now the time has arrived that we have need of a higher loyalty"? A person who takes that attitude does not destroy nationalism. He fulfills its true and deepest purpose.

Another aspect of our life has to do with our religious organizations. I refer to *denominationalism.* Today there is a great hue and cry against denominations. We see only the evil in them. But suppose they are regarded as a step in religious organization—a step which preserved individual freedom and brought to light certain weaknesses in organized Christianity. In that event it is not bad to have denominations. It may be bad to keep them. They are good as a step, but bad as a landing.

For some people the knowledge that standards change has brought a feeling of complete uncertainty. Appreciation for the past has been dulled and responsibility for the present has been deadened. But for the followers of Jesus another way is possible. For them life has many steps. We can respect the past for the steps which those of old have taken. And we can give ourselves to the discovery of the good because we share in a growing process. As each one "serves his day and generation," he is obeying the call of God.

> Slowly the Bible of the race is writ,
> And not on paper leaves, or leaves of stone.
> Each age, each kindred, adds a verse to it,
> Texts of despair or hope, of joy or moan.

God, the Supreme Issue

By Frederick A. Sterner

I and my Father are one. John 10:30.

ST. PAUL at one time wrote to the Corinthians: "And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified." And at that time that was no small matter. It was something exceedingly ridiculous and that written in large letters too. As St. Paul himself said: "We preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness." In the Roman world the name of the humble Galilean was met only with scorn and contempt. Down through these nineteen hundred years men have been urged to accept Jesus Christ; and while many responded with different degrees of sincerity and devotion, many turned away with a sneer and thorough conversions to his cause have been in the minority. Accept Jesus Christ; follow Jesus Christ; make Jesus Christ your personal Savior—such has been the message of every preacher true to his calling. But this message has in many instances been received only with indifference and oft-times with anger and resentment. It is only a few years ago that a number of people were telling us how impractical Jesus was and how impossible he was. And today you need not go very far to find some man or woman who thinks of the name of Jesus Christ as being worthy of use only in the form of a bitter curse.

And yet today Jesus Christ undoubtedly commands more respect and honor than ever before. Ever since the world war, ever since that time when a noted Englishman said, "Now let's give Jesus Christ a chance," we have been learning and sadly becoming conscious of the fact that since the days of St. Paul the world has been hearing about Jesus Christ, but has never taken him seriously. Our present age has to a large extent ceased dodging the issue. Whatever you may think of this day and generation, hypocrisy is something it thoroughly hates. Indeed, it is almost painful in its frankness; and instead of berating Jesus Christ as an impractical dreamer, men are beginning to honor him as the greatest Personality of vision and power, admitting that the only trouble is that they themselves lack the moral courage and the faith to follow him. In Japan, in China, in India, in Europe and America—north, east, south and west—Jesus Christ is held in higher esteem today than at any time since the wise men followed the star in the east.

Very significant indeed are the words of the message sent out by the International Missionary Council at Jerusalem: "In this world, bewildered and groping for its way, Jesus Christ has drawn to himself the attention and admiration of mankind as never before. He stands before men as plainly greater than western civilization, greater than the Christianity that the world has come to know. Many who have not hitherto been won to his church yet find in him their hero and their ideal. Within his church there is a widespread desire for unity centered in his person."

Jesus Not the Chief Issue

Now the whole truth of the matter is that it is not Jesus Christ who is the supreme issue today. He has won a place in the hall of fame. Among prophets, apostles, martyrs, poets and philosophers he has been given a central position. Men respect him; they honor him; they admire him and marvel about him; in many intellectual circles, they pity him. Jesus Christ has his high and lofty place. The supreme issue today is not Jesus Christ. The supreme issue is God himself.

Now that statement may startle some of you. Some of you may feel that no man should dare to utter such a thing. Question God himself! There are some people who gasp at that, people whose symbolism is still summed up in the words, King of kings. But kings have fallen and the days of *lese majeste* are gone. Men today seem to dare to utter anything; and not a few by any means, a number of them with good minds and education, are making God the supreme issue.

But why should we not utter a truth evidence for

which we find right among ourselves and even in some of our own actions? To a large number of men and women today God either is not; or if he is, he is either not good or is just blind, indifferent energy or force. And even though you may admit that deep down in the hearts of most people God still lives and holds sway, nevertheless in their minds and deeds he is ignored and crucified by a cruel indifference or a blind mistrust. You might start with yourself. A certain poet has said:

> We kneel how weak, we rise how full of power.
> Why therefore should we do ourselves this wrong,
> Or others—that we are not always strong . . .

Do you worry? Are you always filled with fear and misgivings? Well, do you not know that that is a form of atheism, a form of lack of faith and trust in God? Men scramble and quarrel for material possessions and gouge from the weak and helpless that which does not rightfully belong to them. Do they not know that this is an indication of a form of atheism? Do they not know that it shows a lack of faith in a Father who grieves while his children walk the paths of unrighteousness? Are you jealous and envious, filled with anxieties lest you will not get your share of your rightful honors? Do you not know that this is a form of unbelief, a lack of faith that there is a God of justice and love? Do you for one moment imagine that the multitudes today are giving much thought to God? Stand at the wayside and watch them whirl by at their giddy pace; look at our pleasure-mad generation: crowded highways, seats filled in the movies, flourishing tom-thumb golf courses, stifling dance halls, multitudinous card parties, endless banquets and stunts of all kinds just to thrill and amuse. No, we do not condemn. It is not that any of these diversions are necessarily sinful in themselves. We all may need them to a certain extent. But it is the contrast that is most damning.

All these places continually crowded, while at the same time here is the empty lecture seat, the empty lodge hall and the empty church pew! What does it all mean? It means just this: "Hog philosophy!"

A Pastoral Prayer

By Charles M. Sheldon

THOU who art God of all nations, Father of mankind, in the name of Thy Son, Companion of men while on earth and still present with us, forbid that we try to make world history without Thy help.

Thou who hast created heaven and earth, and made us in Thine own image, humbly would we reflect Thy glory. Since Thou art our Father, are not we all brothers, sharing a common heritage, a universal kinship? May we dismiss from our hearts and minds race hatred and fear, and eagerly participate in the new spirit of fellowship and understanding among all the peoples of the earth—for do we not all belong to one great Household?

We beseech Thee—Thou who art known to philosopher and little child, because Thy name is Love—unite all nations in friendship. Teach us that the greatest security for all the nations is not in weapons of warfare but in implements of welfare: in the union of industrial forces, in the interchange of the common necessities of life, in the mingling of commerce, in the joy that springs from the absence of hate, in the happiness that has cost no one any pain, and in the rugged strength that is the result of bearing one another's burdens.

We are thankful for all those who were pioneers in the beginnings of this republic, and we are grateful for the memory of those who gave the best they had of service and devotion for the common good, to build a government that should be based on justice and humanity. May we, too, be concerned to preserve from harm the structure of government which has been built not for the enrichment of a few, but for the comfort and happiness of many. Grant us wisdom to meet the problems of today. May we find a way to give eager hands the work they need; and may we go further—to learn that the real sources of crime and poverty and the tragic wastage of human effort are the restless search for pleasure and the insane ambition for power.

With all that we desire for the land which we call our own, we would ask for the right definition of our patriotism. We rejoice when we walk under the folds of our own flag, but may we equally respect the flags of all nations—because Thou art God of all. Teach us that love of country is not manifested in acts of war, but in deeds done to glorify peace. May we have part in the final dissolution of the armed battalions that have walked through the centuries down the iron highway of death. We praise Thee that the nations have renounced war and pledged themselves to walk in paths of peace. Grant that this great deed may soon be followed by the disarmament of the world—so that mankind may be armed with the tools of constructive labor and the joyous songs of creative energy.

By Thy help, we expel the old War Lord from his bloody throne and we yield our allegiance to the Prince of Peace, who shall rule the earth, not with a rod of iron but with the scepter of justice and righteousness. May we—and all men everywhere—grasp hands in friendliness across the international boundaries of the world. And we shall give to Thee, thou great Father-Friend, all the praise through Him who dost give to us the abundant life both in this world and in the world to come, even Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Whether they actually believe in it or not, the multitudes today are living in actual deeds and actions a real hog philosophy: "Eat, drink and be merry; for tomorrow we die"; but how can any man live in accord with this kind of philosophy and really believe that back of this universe of ours there is a God who sees all and "who will render to every man according to his deeds: to them who, by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life . . ."? If we wonder at the multitudes today, it is because there are many who have no God except their idols of tin and brass.

Parlor Philosophers and God

Even more disconcerting today is the attitude of a number of people who think or at least think to some extent: for today we have many parlor philosophers, men who have very decided opinions on religion; as if there were no real religious truths, truths for which men fought, suffered agony and torture and died. But in spite of these one-story intellects there are people of learning and ability as well as others who are sincerely puzzled. They may be willing to admit that what we have been calling God might be a kind of a creative energy, an *elan vital* or life-force; but is this God really more than just It? Is this God really He? Personal? A God that really cares? A God that is good? They cannot forget the world war. How terrible it was: its carnage, its awful aftermath of sin, sorrow, disease and misery! And God just looked on; he didn't turn a finger; he just let men and women suffer and die! So a number have been reasoning. And many others have suffered terrible disillusionment. Let us have freer morals, they said. And so they had freer morals. But what a disappointment! Happiness? No—only more sorrow and distress!

And here are all these modern inventions and devices. Automobiles for pleasure, every conceivable kind of labor saving machine, comforts and luxuries, books, travel; almost everybody having what only the rich used to have and what the kings of olden days never visioned. And yet there are still social complexities never before foreseen. There is unemployment snatching from many that for which they would be willing to labor. There still remain horrible diseases unconquered; and in spite of all progress, nothing has changed the sureness of the coming death. A more comfortable world? Of course; but it's only a world so much the harder to leave! Especially with faith in immortality having become to many very hazy, if not entirely lost. Shall the world improve and progress only to find mere physical comfort and correspondingly fall into mental chaos and spiritual poverty? Oh, the revenge of things! Satisfaction? No. Contentment? No—just maddening futility! Useless striving! Worthless effort! Building for destruction! Achieving just to fall! Not even worth the while to play the man! Not worth the effort to be virtuous or courageous or big or noble!

There was a time when the stars were the patrons of romance and the inspiration of poets, but today the massive telescopes reveal them to be monster suns, billions of miles away, some many times larger than our own sun, telling us of an inconceivably large machine; and where, they ask, in this rolling, grinding, crushing immensity and super-monstrosity can there be a God who cares for little, insignificant man? Barren hopelessness. Deformed and pitiful humanity passing by, gripped in the misery of disease and suffering. Nothing more to be done. Just wait for the clutches of death. Prayer! A pleading for a life! A cry for help! A human soul in agony and distress! But the wide and empty spaces bring no answer. Just silence. Even the fever-parched lips of a trusting, helpless, little child get no response. Just silence. An

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appalling silence! A crash when life was sweetest. A disaster when all seemed happiest. Things and things, the hollow mockery of things! Nothing but a casket and a six-foot ditch! Where in it all is there a God who cares, who hears, who has any concern? A God? Rather a malevolent super demon! And all this today when Jesus Christ is honored more than at any other time in history!

"Respecting" Jesus Not Enough

But probably it is here that we shall find the key to the difficulty. Jesus Christ is honored, admired and respected. But it does not occur to the many admirers of Jesus Christ that this is not enough. Too many simply admire and respect him as a great and good man. They make him just one of the prophets. He is to them just another hero; and the fact that they are willing to make him the greatest does not alter the situation. It will not do to classify him with Buddha, much less to put him in the same category

with Isaiah, Lincoln or Gandhi. Some people by doing this may think that they are honoring him—which they probably are. But we cannot stop here. We cannot simply honor, admire and respect him. We must accept him for all that he claims to be. "I and my Father are one," he said. He tells us he is one with the Father, which also would mean that the Father is one with him. "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father," he told Philip. We must believe him and we must trust him. When he makes this claim, we must have faith in him enough to believe that he who spake as never man spake, who taught as never man taught, who lived as never man lived and who died as never man died is telling us the truth. "I and my Father are one." When we see him, we see God. He is not just a prophet, not just a hero, not just a great idealist, not just a great man. Jesus Christ is God. He is just what the old creed makers called him—"God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God." He and God are one. When we think of God, we must think of him in terms of Jesus Christ; when we think of Jesus Christ, we must think of God and see in him what God is like.

Jesus Christ shows me God. He shows me not merely a human personality, but he shows me personality in its highest form, in that form in which it reaches its perfection and emerges into divinity, demonstrating to me that divinity is not just life-force or blind energy but supreme Personality higher and greater than we can know it in any of ourselves. Jesus Christ thus shows me that God is personal, that he is Father, Mother, Brother, Friend, with all that those words imply in their most perfect and complete conception. Thus Jesus Christ shows us that God is a God who loves and loves supremely, a God who cares and to whom a sparrow is not too small to notice. Jesus Christ shows us a God who gives his best and his all in an effort to make his children divine even like himself, a God who suffers for and with his children, a God who shoulders a cross and hangs upon it in the deepest agony of body and soul, a God who himself goes through the valley of the shadow of death and down into the six-foot ditch—but a God who also breaks the bonds of the grave, who rises, who lives, who reigns, who goes to prepare a place for you and for me. "I and my Father are one."

You cannot honor Jesus Christ without honoring God. What you think of Jesus Christ is what you think of God. He and the Father are one. When Jesus Christ is accepted, God is no longer a supreme issue; then whatever can be explained or remains unexplained, God is intelligent Personality and he loves and cares as none of us can love or care.

The Nature of Divine Love

In "The Christ of the Indian Road," Stanley Jones puts it this way: "Men wonder if there can be a good God back of things when they see earthquakes wipe out the innocent and the guilty alike and innocent children suffer from nameless diseases they did not bring on themselves. But the distracted and doubting mind turns toward Jesus with relief and says, 'If God is like that, he is all right' . . . If God thinks in terms of little children as Jesus did, cares for the leper, the outcast, and the blind, and if his heart is like that gentle heart that broke upon the cross, then he can have my heart without reservation and without question."

Perhaps much of our muddled thinking today is due to our misinterpretation of divine love. We are a soft generation used to luxury and our powers of endurance are not nearly so great as was that of our fathers who were accustomed to misery and hardship. In harmony with the prevalent love of ease and the silky roads of sense satisfaction, many have been talking of divine love as though it were that foolish thing usually associated with a doting, white-bearded, old grandfather.

When shall we learn that with love there is suffering! *Real, divine love, the love of God, is terrible!* It is not the wrath of God that is terrible; it is the love of God! Terrible, unswerving, turning neither to the right nor to the left—straight to the point! Purposive, without any possible change! Designing to fashion an immortal soul! It is like the sculptor with his chisel, cutting and chipping until he has fashioned a masterpiece. It is crushing and grinding and moulding—putting through the fiery furnace until out of the clay there comes a brilliant diamond. It is God taking you and agonizing and suffering with you until he has developed divinity like that of his own. And you cannot escape it. You cannot run away from it.

A Love that Stings

It is a love that pulls you out of your feathered beds of ease. It casts you from luxurious nests and puts you on the battle front, there to find resistance and courage. It's a love that annoys you in your selfishness and puts you among misery and poverty until in you there springs forth sympathy and love for your brother. It is a love that haunts you in the hour of doubt, calms you in the hour of rebellion, shames you in the hour of debauchery, lifts you from the mire and pulls out of the filth.

> O Love that wilt not let me go,
> I rest my weary soul in Thee;
> I give Thee back the life I owe,
> That in Thine ocean depths its flow
> May richer, fuller be.

Enervated darlings of luxury and sport may cry in despair that there is no God, or say that whatever God is, he does not care; men may puzzle over the problem of suffering and misfortune with seemingly little help from the heavens; but history and experience show that whatever else may be said, it nevertheless remains true that great character and sainthood come not from cushioned couches but from fiery furnaces, from trials and crosses.

The writer of the closing chapter of Streeter's Symposium on Immortality tells of a young woman who lost her husband. In her sorrow and bereavement she railed against God and cursed him. At first she felt that it was wrong to rebel, but then she felt that God

respected her for being honest. Years afterward, viewing everything in perspective and telling her experiences, she says to a visiting vicar: "Look at the fruits. Look at my children. Do you think the foolish undisciplined girl that I was could have trained and taught them as they have been trained and taught?" Cardinal O'Connell in his sermon on immortality tells of St. Teresa in terrible agony on her death bed crying out, "More, Lord, more!" "Make me crystal pure," were the dying words of another saint. It does not seem as though God's greatest children just come. They only fully appear after they have taken the road that leads through Gethsemane and up to Calvary.

Look back to Galilee. There you see Divine Love, terrible and sublime, enacting its own drama, accepting the bitterest cup, sacrificing everything, suffering to the utmost, taking upon himself all the burden of a sinful world, sinking with a broken heart. In the wilderness you see this Divine Love battling and overcoming temptation. Divine Love faces the forces of the world. His awful refusal to compromise is terrible. With terrible earnestness he faces Jerusalem, defies every power of darkness, carries a cross, goes down to a grave and rises triumphant over all the forces of the universe. That is Jesus Christ. And men admire that. All that they honor and respect. But you, don't just do that! Love him! Trust him! Worship him! That's God! "I and my Father are one."

Perils of Patriotism

By Roger T. Nooe

And the truth shall make you free. John 8:32.

IT MAY seem strange to speak of the perils of patriotism. I confess to a little shock, albeit stimulating to thought, in finding myself preparing this message as we approach the Fourth of July. With the story of our national independence, with the glory of our republic, with all the sacred sentiments that attach themselves to "the stars and stripes," it would have been easier and more delightful to be borne on the tide of patriotic pride and to feel secure so long as we have a citizenry who love their country. It would seem that the danger to any land is in the lack of patriotism. When love of country languishes, progress halts and deterioration begins. When selfish and flabby living makes us indifferent to the welfare of our country, we lose one of the strongest and most compelling motives that bind men together in cooperative living. When the struggles and sufferings of our forefathers to achieve liberty of mind and conscience, to found a republic of free people, to enfranchise the human soul no longer move us to grateful recognition of their labors nor stir our blood and brain to cherish our heritage, to consecrate our labors in meeting the issues of today with courage as they met the issues in their day, we forfeit our rights as citizens and preclude further progress for our country.

Perils, Too, in Religion

And yet I offer for your thought certain perils in patriotism. Lest someone shall think I am dealing dangerously with a subject that is sacrosanct, allow me to say that there are perils in religion if it descends into magic, or if it ascends, going up into the air into fanaticism. There are perils in education if it develops cunning and cleverness and makes sport of conscience and self-control. Crimes have been committed in the name of patriotism no less than in the name of liberty. Dr. Samuel Johnson once said, "Patriotism is the last resort of a scoundrel." Under the guise of love of country, men may appeal to partisan pride, keep alive sectional strife, and deny others the rights they claim for themselves.

Patriotism that has in it the germ of human brotherhood contains also the virus of exclusiveness and national snobbery. An unbridled patriotism thrives upon a shallow sense of superiority. It discounts all that is not indigenous. It disparages all that is not native. It partakes of shallow learning and thin perspective, which is always a dangerous thing. Patriotism that is exclusive does an injustice to history. Especially is this true when it comes from a youthful country as is our own. We may love all that is American and yet pay tribute to all the influences that have come from far and near to make us what we are. A nation that is truly great will have no fear in acknowledging its indebtedness to all the elements that have made it great.

"Humanity's Day"

Among the many holidays in the calendar of nations, most of which celebrate victories over other people, I would like to see a worldwide day of recognition and appreciation. Each nation might proclaim the good that is in others instead of shouting to the world its own virtues. Such a day would acknowledge the streams of influence that have come from other civilizations to fertilize their own. For one blessed day, each nation would look beyond its borders not with greed but with gratitude. It would be humanity's day. It would be the day of the Lord. Honor would be given to poets, artists, scientists, statesmen as nationals, yet as international in the scope of their influence. Such a day would capture the imagination, set us free from narrow nationalisms, and be at least a gesture toward world fraternity. I do not consider this an impracticable bit of idealism. I even presume to suggest that there is an organization that is prepared to sponsor such a day, and that is Rotary International, with representatives in sixty-three countries committed to the principle of freedom and the recognition of good wherever found, composed of leaders in the life of these nations. I believe it would find a following among the peoples of the world, once it gives of its strength to such a day of appreciation and recognition.

A specious patriotism can create more shackles than it destroys. It can prate of liberty and prey upon the

souls of men. It can build a wall to shut out others and imprison those who are within. Catch words and phrases become more potent than creative principles. There is a patriotism that glorifies the past but stultifies the present. Stifled by its self-imposed limitations, it never senses the breath of a wider and purer air with the exhilarating doctrine that new occasions teach new duties. The provincial patriot is simply an egotist marooned from the flow of our common civilization.

No country need love its own less because it honors others. Surely our own nation, which with its native genius is a composite of the achievements of

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many races should be the first to acknowledge its indebtedness to all and to discharge this indebtedness in freely serving all.

A False Patriotism

Lacking in this, the peril of patriotism is that it shall become imperialistic in design. It is not a far cry from the sense of superiority and exclusiveness in which a nation becomes drunk with power and prestige to the desire for dominance over others. To be sure, no nation begins with this as a positive program. It is an outgrowth of accumulated power, selfish living, swollen pride, and is goaded by fear, a fear that is born of its own provincial thinking under the name of patriotism. Nations, like individuals, that live to themselves, refusing to live with others, come by a subtle process in justifying themselves when they live off of others.

I have not yet spoken of the greatest peril in a specious patriotism. It is in identifying God with national interests. When this is done, nationalism becomes religion. The interests of the state become the supreme law of life. The flag is deified. God is either dethroned or provincialized. Excessive patriotism in which the flame becomes a conflagration invariably leads to practical atheism or a truncated and sectionalized deity. Plans are formulated and then God's guidance is invoked. It is no more than a polite gesture. The God and Father of all humanity becomes a national God. He is stripped of his universality. The Prince of Peace is clothed in the armor of Mars or Woden. When any people, French, German, English, or American, lives by the slogan, "For country, right or wrong," they build an insuperable barrier which makes impossible the concert of nations on the basis of right and justice. We build blindly and for a day until we recognize the fatherhood of God over all peoples and the folly of invoking his guidance upon unethical procedures, for right is right and God is God.

Widening Horizons

The preventive of these perils is not in less patriotism, but in a better brand of patriotism. I am not for one moment suggesting that love for one's country shall be lost in love for all countries. This is as foolish as it is vague. Nationalism is necessary to internationalism. True patriotism can be a highway that unites nations instead of walls of separation and bristling forts. As a people, we have made much of the Declaration of Independence. I read it again on the Fourth of July to my family and feel that it is a season of devotion. I mark again its noble utterances about the laws of nature and of nature's God and what they entitle all men to enjoy. No narrow horizon shut in these adventurous souls. They were claiming for themselves certain inalienable rights because they belonged to the human family. No one can read in the spirit this deathless document and the glorious history that has issued from it and be indifferent to any man or nation in their struggle for freedom.

It occurs to me further that our country might refresh its ideals and vitalize its mission, which I conceive to be a ministry to mankind in the leadership of democracy and world peace, by issuing a Declaration of Dependence, holding our freedom in the fear of God, renewing our faith at the altar of prayer, and reviving our love for all men at the cross of Christ.

In this truth is our freedom. To love and not to hate, to serve and not to exploit, to share and not to starve ourselves and others, to be builders of the City of God to which all nations shall bring their glory. Edwin Markham strikes the note for the New Age when he says:

> "Live and let live!" was the call of the Old—
> The call of the world when the world was cold—
> The call of men when they pulled apart—
> The call of the race with a chill on the heart.
>
> But "Live and help live!" is the cry of the New—
> The cry of the world with the Dream shining through—
> The cry of the Brother World rising to birth—
> The cry of the Christ for a Comrade-like earth.

WHO'S WHO IN THIS ISSUE

FOR A long time The Hyde Park Baptist Church of Chicago has practiced Christian unity in its congregation. That is to say, you do not have to be a Baptist—it is sufficient that you are a Christian! —to get in. In addition, they now practice Christian unity in the pulpit! Two pastors—Rev. E. L. Tibbetts and Rev. ROLLAND W. SCHLOERB, the former a Baptist, the latter an unimmersed minister of the Evangelical denomination—work together. Mr. Schloerb is making a large place for himself in Chicago religious life, as he has also in the hearts of his liberal minded parishioners.

Dr. JEROME DAVIS, *is Professor of* Social Ethics in the Divinity School at Yale. A graduate of Oberlin College, he taught at Dartmouth before going to New Haven. He speaks the Russian language fluently, and makes frequent trips to the Soviet republic upon whose affairs he is one of America's sanest interpreters.

One of the most commanding preachers in the South is DR. ROGER T. NOOE of Vine Street Christian Church in the heart of Nashville, Tennessee. The editor will not soon forget a Sunday evening supper at his home when Dr. Nooe told of the sense of inward release and emancipation that came to him at a recent interracial conference when he, a born southerner, sat down to dinner for the first time in his life with colored men and women.

Rev. H. B. HUDNUT *is pastor of the* Windermere Presbyterian Church, Cleveland, Ohio. He served overseas, had six years' experience in the steel business at Youngstown, Ohio, then graduated from Western Theological Seminary, Pittsburgh. He is the son of the Rev. William H. Hudnut of First Presbyterian Church, Youngstown.

For twelve years Rev. FREDERICK ALVIN STERNER has been pastor of two churches in suburbs of Reading, Pennsylvania—Olivet Reformed, at Riverside, and Trinity Reformed, at Mt. Penn. He is a graduate of the Theological Seminary of the Reformed Church in the United States, at Lancaster, Pa.

Recommended for a Distinguished Service medal, Rev. WILLIAM E. BROOKS came out of the war after a Y. M. C. A. and chaplaincy record covering 29 months and returned to his pastorate at First Presbyterian Church, Allentown, Pennsylvania. He is now pastor of First Church at Morgantown, West Virginia.

Rev. IVAN LEE HOLT *is one of the* most progressive and influential ministers of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. Pastor of St. John's Church, St. Louis, for the past twelve years, he was formerly professor of Old Testament literature at Southern Methodist University in Dallas, Texas. He earned his Ph.D. degree at the University of Chicago in 1907-10.

The pastoral prayer is by Rev. CHARLES M. SHELDON, D.D., pastor emeritus of First Congregational Church, Topeka, Kansas, and author of "In His Steps."

TITLES *and* TEXTS

What PULPIT Readers are Preaching About

PHILIP BARKER, Victoria Avenue United, Brandon, Man., Can. "Extraordinary Christians." Matt. 5:47—"What do ye more than others?"

GEORGE N. MAGWOOD, University Park Congregational, Portland, Ore. "The Challenge of a Great Task." Neh. 6:3—"I am doing a great work. Why should the work cease, while I came down to you?"

JOSEPH W. REEVES, Congregational, South Dartmouth, Mass. "Cheated Children." Lam. 4:1, 2—"The sacred gems are scattered over every street; the priceless sons of Zion, worth their weight in gold, count no more than crockery, mere pots of clay!"

ERNEST BOURNER ALLEN, Pilgrim Congregational, Oak Park, Ill. "Pilgrims of Eternity." Eccl. 3:11—"He hath made everything beautiful in its time: also he hath set eternity in their heart, yet so that man cannot find out the work that God hath done from the beginning even unto the end." (Also Psa. 90:1, 2, 4; 103: 8-13; 8:3, 4.)

GAIUS G. ATKINS, Auburn seminary. "Be Watchful and Strengthen the Things That Remain." Rev. 3:2—"Be thou watchful, and establish the things that remain, which were ready to die; for I have found no works of thine perfected before my God."

ALVA V. KING, First Presbyterian, Hastings, Neb. "The Dangers of Safety." 2 Sam. 18:8—"The forest devoured more people that day than the sword devoured."

WILEY R. DEAL, First Baptist, Maryville, Tenn. "The Futility of the Spectacular." Luke 16:31—"If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead."

C. O. DUFFORD, Holy Trinity Lutheran, Sharon, Pa. "Spiritual Prosperity." Luke 6:12—"He went out into a mountain to pray and continued all night in prayer to God."

ALVIN E. MAGARY, Lafayette Avenue Presbyterian, Brooklyn, N. Y. "The Mind and the Task." Eph. 1:17, 18—"That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of Glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, and what the exceeding greatness of his power toward us who believe."

FOR YOUR SERMON TITLE AND TEXT

(Mail to The Christian Century Pulpit)

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Title of sermon

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Text used (Write out the text)

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Name of minister

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Name of church

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Address

The Editor's Page

The Event of the Month

PRESIDENT HOOVER'S entrance into the world economic situation with his proposal of an all around suspension of inter-governmental debts and reparations for one year has already brought decisive help and is sure to have far-reaching consequences. It is the most significant acknowledgment thus far by the United States that isolation is intolerable and impossible. Powerful as our nation is, we are not independent. We are part of the whole world's life. Disaster to the economic life of Germany or any other country drags us down with it. At last the nations are becoming aware that the prosperity of one nation is the concern of all. The concept of "buying power" has come to be familiar to the man in the street. The need of a "market"—that is, a prosperous population at home and prosperous peoples abroad, is fundamental to our own prosperity. The President's offer was both a neighborly act and an act of national self-interest. If it can start a revival of industry the immediate cost to our treasury will be a bagatelle compared to the increased inflow of prosperity taxes and the widespread benefit to the people. No one can believe that, after one year, the world will return to the old basis of debts and reparations. During this breathing and recuperative period we may expect a total revision of this economic prolongation of the war. Mr. Hoover's year is an economic armistice. It will be followed by an economic peace!

President Hoover's Economic Armistice

The Book of the Month

THE GROWTH OF THE IDEA OF GOD. *By Shailer Mathews. Macmillan,* $2.50.

FOR a full generation Dean Mathews has been one of our most prolific writers of books on religion. His writings have dealt with each successive phase of that prolonged perturbation which Christian faith has experienced during his life-time. First there was the problem created by the higher criticism. He contributed to that. Then there was the problem of the relation of evolution to the religious view of the world. He contributed to that. Then there was the problem of translating historic Christianity into social terms. He contributed to that. He has had a genius for finding the front line where the firing was hottest and doing his soldierly bit right there. And his new book finds him still on the front line, in that segment where the firing is hottest just now. It is the same Mathews whom we see, and yet a different Mathews. His mind has had something like a new birth. He thinks with the freshness of a youth who has just taken his doctor's degree. He is unencumbered with such baggage as you might expect a scholar of his years to carry. His problem is: What, through all its varying and evolving forms, does the idea of God really and validly mean for the human spirit? And he answers the question with an insight as lucid and original as can be credited to any modern writer. Dean Mathews has his own definition of God. In my judgment, it is a sound definition, not quite the equivalent of Professor Wieman's, but leading to essentially the same conclusions. The word God, says Mathews, stands for our conception of the personality-evolving and personally responsive activities of the universe. Through all the forms of theistic belief, but especially the Hebrew-Christian story, he traces this essential meaning of the word. I can not review his book here; I wish I could. But I can only point to it. If anyone doubts whether he should buy it, I suggest that he step into a bookstore, turn to and read the two or three opening pages of the chapter entitled, "A Contemporary God."

A Thought for the Month

EVEN spirituality has its perils. It is possible for our soul in its more exalted moods to pray for things that are quite abstract and transcendental, if not unreal. It is easier to pray for goodness in general than for strength to do right in the actual situation in which we stand. It is easier to adore Truth with a capital "T" than earnestly to ask God's help to speak the truth when men expect us to flatter them with a lie. Spirituality is always in danger of passing into empty sentimentality. Religion, which is the most real thing in life, easily tends to become the most unreal. Faith launching out into the deep must not forget that it is due to return again to the shore. A mysticism that means only escape from the commonplace is dangerous; aye it is false. It is a sort of aesthetic luxury, a pleasurable massaging of the emotions. Our prayer habits should be guarded against all such self-deception, and all our aspirations kept rooted in the great common work-a-day values like those which Jesus illuminated in the Prayer which he taught his disciples. Our daily bread, our moral integrity, a good will in our relations with neighbors and associates, a forgiving spirit, strength to meet our actual temptations—these, as well as the coming of the good kingdom of love amongst men, should ever be the substance of our hope and prayer. It is not right that our spiritual exercises should cause us to lose relish and zest for our daily duties. And when that does happen we may be sure that we have lost connection with reality and that our spirituality is false.

Spirituality and Sentimentality

Charles Clayton Morrison

A READER POINTS OUT THE MERITS OF

The Christian Century Pulpit

WORDS of approval are continually coming to the office of the PULPIT, but Rev. George N. Magwood, minister of the University Congregational Church, Portland, Ore., has taken time to indicate the specific merits of this preachers' magazine. Here are six reasons, according to Dr. Magwood's estimate, why THE CHRISTIAN CENTURY PULPIT has taken its place as "alone in its field":

(1) The very outstanding pulpit representatives whose sermons are reproduced from month to month.
(2) The up-to-date themes of the sermons published.
(3) The modern and vital viewpoint.
(4) The emphasis on experiential religion.
(5) The social passion that breathes through every number.
(6) The international insistence—the world and interracial spirit manifested in the sermons.

Here are other words of commendation of the Pulpit:

"You are doing a fine piece of work in your editing of The Christian Century Pulpit—profitable at home and abroad."—*P. F. Price, (Missionary in China for 41 years.)*

"I find the Pulpit of great value and inspiration. It is very suggestive as one reads and plans for his pulpit work."—*Edward G. French, Federated Church, Cambridge, Vt.*

"I like the Pulpit. My only criticism is that it is not published often enough!"—*Albert G. Cornwell, Park Church, Elmira, N. Y.*

"The Pulpit is unique in its field. I would rather have it for sermonic study than volumes of sermons, because it presents contemporaneous sermons from many and varied types of preachers. It is the only 'preachers magazine' of which I keep a complete file."—*W. R. Siegart, Church of the Redeemer, Ramsey, N. J.*

"I find myself each month looking forward to the coming of the Pulpit, and always I find in it something helpful and inspiring."—*James F. Jenness, Cristobal, Canal Zone, Union Church.*

"I have found the sermons in the Pulpit both stimulating in their intellectual content, and encouraging in that they reveal a hopeful spiritual outlook even in these trying times."—*John A. Vollenweider, Executive Secretary, Council of Churches of Buffalo and Erie County, N. Y.*

"I read with great enjoyment every issue of The Christian Century Pulpit."—*E. S. Moreland, Arlington Avenue Christian Church, Los Angeles, Cal.*

"You deserve much credit for the Pulpit. It is filling a great need in our country today; for some of us have little opportunity to get away from the sound of our own voices."—*C. Marshall Muir, First Presbyterian Church, Van Wert, O.*

"I enjoyed especially your Young Ministers Number, in January. But I find every issue a source of help and inspiration."—*Claude W. Warren, Community Church, Land O'Lakes, Wis.*

"The sermons you publish are inspiringly devotional and thought-provoking."—*A. J. Knoll, First Reformed Church, Apollo, Pa.*

"You are doing an excellent piece of work both in the Pulpit and The Christian Century. No preacher can calmly drift along in smug complacency about our world, if he reads your papers seriously." — *Albea Godbold, College Place Methodist Church, Greensboro, N. C.*

"Let me add a belated word of approbation of 'our mutual friend,' The Christian Century Pulpit. We elected to become a 'charter reader,' and have profited much thereby."—*James D. Kitchin, Jr., First Christian Church, Newport News, Va.*

The PULPIT is giving inspiration to thousands of pastors who are perplexed by the religious, social, and economic problems of today. The seven (or more) sermons in each monthly number represent the best thought of those who are meeting these problems.

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